

REMARKS**Summary of the Office Action**

Claims 1, 5-7 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,618,396) (hereinafter "Kondo") in view of Kobayashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,144,411) (hereinafter "Kobayashi").

Claims 2-4 and 8-10 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 2. Claim 7 has been amended to include the features of claim 8. Claim 13 has been amended to include the features of claim 8. Accordingly, claims 2 and 8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Also, new claims 14-17 have been added to be dependent on amended claim 13 to include features of claims 9-12. As a result, if the instant Amendment is entered, claims 1, 3-7 and 9-17 will remain pending for consideration.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 5-7 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kondo in view of Kobayashi. These rejections have been rendered moot because claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 2, claim 7 has been amended to include the features of claim 8, and claim 13 has been amended to include the features of claim 8. The

Office Action has indicated that claims 2 and 8 include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested. Also, withdrawal of the objections to claims 2-4 and 8-10 is respectfully requested. Newly-amended independent claims 1, 7 and 13 are now in condition for allowance. In addition, dependent claims 3-6, 9-12 and 14-17 are allowable at least because of their dependence from independent claims 1, 7 and 13, respectively, and the reasons set forth above.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the entry of the Amendments to place the application in clear condition for allowance or, in the alternative, in better form for appeal. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution.

Except for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. § 1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including

any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0573.

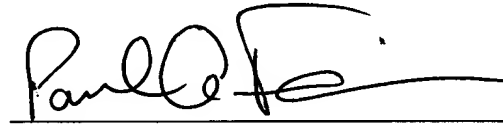
This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3).

Respectfully submitted,

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